

Dealer-FIT Get Ready!

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Now that 2009 is behind us, it is time for IDA Dealer Members to be thinking about gathering together information to participate in the 2010 Dealer-FIT survey. The information available in this report is vitally important to dealership management as they navigate through these turbulent economic times.

The 2009 Dealer-FIT Survey had a record 217 participants and your association looks to even more participation in 2010. Why should your firm participate? The Dealer-FIT survey is basically a "cost-of-doing-business" survey, but with the huge advantage that all participants are garage door dealers. Therefore, the data assembled pertains directly to your business. Furthermore, the survey is free to all participants. The only restrictions are that the participating firm must be a dealer or distributor of garage doors (not primarily a manufacturer) and the firm must be a member of the International Door Association.

Dealers participate by securing a simple form (see below on how to obtain this form), filling it out, and submitting an income statement and balance sheet to Zoller Consulting, Inc., a firm appointed by IDA as the Dealer-FIT coordinator. The participating dealer and Zoller Consulting then sign a confidentiality agreement to assure that all data and information submitted by the participating dealer to Zoller Consulting, Inc. is held in strict confidence. The data is then assembled, not only by size of company, but also by business emphasis. The participant's information is combined with the data from other firms to develop a mean average for each category. This means that when the dealer wishes to compare his or her firm's data with the average mean results in a particular category, the comparison is with similar dollar volume dealerships as well as with firms with a similar business model

(residential emphasis, commercial emphasis, or primarily distribution).

From the Dealer-FIT Survey Report, dealership management can compare a myriad of critical data and ratios to help them find the best financial and managerial solutions for their company. Because the ratios are garage door industry specific, the ratios and data in the report allow the prudent manager an opportunity to adjust to the current environment without reinventing the proverbial wheel. The Dealer-FIT Survey Report shows data such as the cost of labor, gross margin, productivity in dollars per employee and per truck, rent, advertising expense, healthcare costs, management or owner compensation, sales expense and many, many other expenses, all in a format that allows the dealer to compare his or her business with other like dealerships. A separate chart shows the mean average break down of sales (residential new, residential retrofit, commercial sectional, commercial rolling and commercial and residential service) for the total of the participants within each category. Many dealers regard this report as a crucial tool for business planning meetings.

In years past, dealer participants complained that the time needed to fill out the forms to complete the survey was excessive or was considered too complicated. As a result, while intentions were good, dealers procrastinated filling out the survey form with the result that the time deadline expired. The basic new Dealer-FIT survey can be completed in 30 minutes or less, assuming the participant has an income statement and balance sheet. For those dealers requiring a comprehensive comparison of their numbers with the results of the survey, more time is required to make sure the participant's data matches the Dealer-FIT reporting model. Contact Zoller Consulting, Inc. for more details.

To participate, the IDA Dealer Member has a number of choices:

- Go to zollerconsultinginc.com and click on the IDA Dealer- FIT tab. This tab will direct the participant to the IDA website, doors.org. Enter your membership number and password and download the participant's forms; or
- Go directly to doors.org, and follow the same directions as above; or
- Email john@zollerconsulting.com to request the participant's forms. Zoller Consulting will then email or mail (USPD) the reports to you; or
- Phone Zoller Consulting, Inc. at 800-243-2771 and the forms will be emailed or mailed to you; or
- Write John Zoller at Zoller Consulting, Inc., 1553 Cleveland Road, Wooster, OH 44691 to have the forms emailed or mailed to you.

For dealers to participate in the Dealer-FIT Survey, access to the forms is not an obstacle!

A recent survey of participants in the 2009 Dealer-FIT Survey voted to receive the 2010 Dealer-FIT Survey results in an electronic format with the option of receiving a printed copy of the report at an additional cost. Participation is the best way for the IDA Dealer Member to obtain the invaluable information in this "cost-of-doing-business" survey. We at Zoller Consulting, Inc. look forward to hearing from you.



John E. Zoller and David H. Bowen comprise Zoller Consulting, Inc. of Wooster, Ohio. Zoller Consulting provides consultation of managerial effectiveness and financial performance of construction related businesses. They also offer customized seminars and training sessions. In addition, Zoller Consulting provides acquisition management, including finding buyers or sellers, locating funding sources, transaction structuring, and negotiating and organizing the transition to new ownership. Contact Zoller Consulting, Inc. at 330.262.8500 or johnzoller@aol.com.